



Operation Onward Liberty

U.S. Africa Command Fact Sheet

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Program Overview

Operation Onward Liberty (OOL) is a U.S. Africa Command mission to provide U.S. military advisers and mentors to the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL). OOL began in January 2010 as a five-year Defense Sector Reform (DSR) program, designed to support the larger Department of State (DOS)-led Liberia Security Sector Reform (SSR) program. OOL execution is led by U.S. Marine Corps Forces Africa (MARFORAF) and coordinated with assistance from Economic Community of Western African States (ECOWAS) partner nations.



Liberian Cpl. Joseph Fallah, rifle range non-commissioned officer in charge, observes soldiers from the Armed Forces of Liberia as they complete annual rifle qualifications on April 1, 2011. Under the mentorship of U.S. military forces, Liberian soldiers took command of daily operations at the Edward Binyah Kesselly rifle range. (U.S. Marine Forces Africa photo by Corporal Cullen Tiernan)

Objectives

Operation Onward Liberty's goal is to assist the Liberians build a military that is professional, apolitical, subordinate to civilian leadership, and respectful of human rights. OOL seeks to help AFL develop its ability to independently sustain and train the force, contribute to the development of a professional officer and NCO corps, and institute a unit training and evaluation system. The operation focuses on AFL's mission sets: disaster response and humanity assistance, search and rescue by land and sea, defense of the nation, support of national law. U.S. service members aim to ultimately hand off training to the AFL and assume a support and advisor role.

Benefits

At the end of a 14-year civil war in 2003, Liberia's military was deactivated and demobilized, leaving a void. By stepping in to help, the United States helps ensure stability in Liberia and the region and encourage progress toward a safe, stable, secure Africa. The U.S. is one of Liberia's strongest supporter in its democratization and reconstruction efforts. Liberia held presidential and legislative elections in fall 2011 were declared free, fair, and transparent by ECOWAS, the African Union, the Carter Center, and other observers.

Facts and Figures

During 2006-2009, under the DOS-led SSR program, about 2,000 soldiers were recruited and vetted by contract trainers to form an entirely new Armed Forces of Liberia. The program also constructed or renovated training facilities at three bases. Now, under the AFRICOM-led Operation Onward Liberty, about 50 military advisors and mentors are assigned one-year tours to continue the U.S. assistance and support to the AFL's military transformation.

Key Quote

"My motto here is one team, one mission, one goal," said Linda Thomas-Greenfield, U.S. Ambassador to Liberia. "Liberia

went through a tough period. Our goal as the U.S. government is to help this government, help this president, succeed in showing the Liberian people that peace is better than war, and that democracy is the route they should be following. It is a mission that is challenging for all of us, but it's more challenging for the people of Liberia. Mentors to the AFL have that task. The people of Liberia for 15 years had a military that did not respect human rights, and now we have a military that is respected, and one that respects human rights, and we want to continue to build that here in this country."

Other Sources

[U.S. Military Security Assistance in Liberia Progresses](#)

[Onward Liberty Provides U.S. Mentors to Armed Forces of Liberia](#)

[Marine Forces Africa Commander Visits Liberia, Gauges Progress of Onward Liberty Mentorship](#)

[Armed Forces of Liberia's Soldiers Are Autonomous on Rifle Range](#)